



National Communications System

Purpose: The National Communications System (NCS), consisting of 22 Federal member departments and agencies, is responsible for ensuring the availability of a viable national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) telecommunications infrastructure.

Background: On August 21, 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed a Presidential Memorandum establishing the NCS and defining its mission. The memorandum describes a single, unified NCS formed by "linking together, improving, and extending, on an evolutionary basis, the communications facilities and components of the various Federal agencies...to provide necessary communications for the Federal Government under all conditions ranging from a normal situation to national emergencies and international crisis, including nuclear attack."

In April 1984, Executive Order 12472, Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Functions, formally changed the NCS mission. The order changed the focus from planning and coordinating a single, unified Government communications system to assisting the Executive Office of the President in exercising wartime and non-wartime emergency telecommunications responsibilities, and in coordinating the planning and provisioning of NS/EP communications for the Federal Government under all circumstances.

To successfully fulfill its mission, the NCS fosters interagency cooperation through the Committee of Principals (COP)/ Council of Representatives (COR) and serves as a focal point for joint industry and Government NS/EP telecommunications coordination and planning. In partnership with the NCS, the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee provides industry advice and expertise to the President on matters related to NS/EP telecommunications.

NCS Member Organizations

Department of State
Department of the Treasury
Department of Defense
Department of Justice
Department of the Interior
United States Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Transportation
Department of Energy
Department of Veterans Affairs
Central Intelligence Agency
Federal Emergency Management Agency
The Joint Staff
General Services Administration
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
National Security Agency
United States Postal Service
Federal Reserve Board
Federal Communications Commission

Highlights:

- ❑ During the past three and a half decades, the NCS has nurtured, promoted, and achieved both interagency cooperation and partnership between the Federal Government and the telecommunications industry.
- ❑ In 1984 the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications was activated to assist industry and Government in the initiation, coordination, restoration, and reconstitution of NS/EP telecommunications.
- ❑ The NCS has initiated many significant plans and programs aimed toward enhancing the NS/EP telecommunications posture of the United States.
- ❑ The NCS draws on the resources of its 22 Federal members to coordinate emergency telecommunications following natural disasters (i.e., hurricanes and floods), wartime efforts (Operation Desert Storm), acts of terrorism (Oklahoma City), potential hazards (Year 2000 conversion), and humanitarian aid efforts (Operations Provide Hope and Provide Comfort).

Contact Information: Additional information may be obtained by contacting External Affairs, NCS.

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